

11-30-2011

We Are...Marshall, November 30, 2011

Office of Marshall University Communications

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The Newsletter for Marshall University November 30, 2011

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Commencement begins at 10 a.m. at Cam Henderson Center.

[Read more.](#)

Left: William Cammack Campbell will receive an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters at the Dec. 10 commencement.



Please join President and Mrs. Kopp for the annual Family Holiday Party on Thursday, Dec. 8

[Click to read invitation online.](#)

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[Read more.](#)

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Classified Staff Updates

Classified Staff collecting personal items for holiday project

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Donations will be accepted until 4:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Dec. 13. [Click for a list of dropoff locations.](#)

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In the recent Classified Staff election, Terrence Olson, Public Safety, and Donna Megquier, Physical Plant, have been elected to fill two vacant positions in EEO Group 60.70, Skilled Crafts and Service Maintenance. They will serve until June 30, 2013.

Nominations for another vacancy, EEO Group 30, closed Nov. 29. All voting, which will be available from 6 a.m. Tuesday, Dec. 13 through midnight Wednesday, Dec. 14, will be electronic.

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Annual World Congress of Nano-S&T, held Oct. 23-26 in Dalian, China. His trip was funded by the WV Higher Education Policy Commission and NASA ESPCoR.

[Read more.](#)

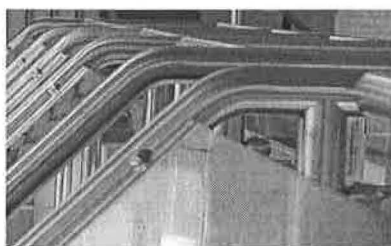
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The data in the study by Dr. Eric R. Blough and his colleagues at MU's Center for Diagnostic Nanosystems indicate there is a dose-dependent increase in the concentration of cerium in the liver of animals that had been exposed to the nanoparticles, which are only about 1/40,000 times as large as the width of a human hair.

[Read more.](#)

Newsletter Contest: Where's This?



One winner will be drawn from the correct answers to the question of where or what is in this Marshall-related photograph.

Marshall students, faculty, staff and alumni are eligible.

Send your entries to weargreen@marshall.edu. Entries must be submitted by 5 p.m. Monday, Dec. 5. Entries must have the person's name, affiliation (to Marshall), phone number and mailing address.

[Click to view larger version of the contest photo.](#)

Win two "We Are . . . Marshall" Kelly green shirts!



Mr. and Ms. Marshall are shown in the Kelly green shirts that will be given to one lucky winner!

Other Coming Events

Marshall groups, WV Symphony Chorus to present Haydn, Beethoven works

More than 200 musicians will join forces at 8 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 1, as the Marshall University Choral Union and Chamber Choir, together with the MU Orchestra and the West Virginia Symphony Orchestra Chorus, present Franz Joseph Haydn's "Lord Nelson" Mass and Ludwig Van Beethoven's

Marshall University Jazz Ensemble 12.0 to present 'Senior Day' concert Saturday

The Marshall University Jazz Ensemble 12.0, under the direction of Dr. Ed Bingham, will present its finale performance of the fall semester at 2 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 3, in Smith Recital Hall. Featured will be the music of the Marla Schnelder Orchestra, The Radiohead Jazz Project, Stan Kenton, Bob Florence, Antonio Carlos Jobim and

"Choral Fantasy." The event will take place in Smith Recital Hall.

Gordon Goodwin.

[Read more.](#)

[Read more.](#)

New environmental specialist hired at Marshall



Travis M. Bailey recently joined the Marshall University staff as the environmental specialist in the Health and Safety Department, according to Brian Carrico, director of health and safety.

Bailey, a native of Eleanor, W.Va., is a two-time graduate of Marshall, having earned a bachelor's degree in microbiology and a master's degree in biology. He has served as an adjunct faculty member for the past three years teaching microbiology, an endeavor he plans to continue.

[Read more.](#)

Morrow Library Stack Tower Reorganization to start in January



The Morrow Library Stack Tower will undergo a major reorganization project during the spring semester and summer sessions next year. The primary goal of the reorganization is to consolidate all the monographic material (books) and to place the periodical collection into Library of Congress call number sequence instead of the current scheme, said Nat DeBruin, university archivist and member of the University Libraries staff.

[Read more.](#)

Profile: Brittney Emerson

- a series on interesting Marshall University people



She became a lifeguard without ever having a swimming lesson, made the MU dance team and never took a lesson until she was in high school, has a budding decorative painting business, and no surprise here, never had an art class.

Brittney Emerson's life brims with "cans" and very few "cant's." The bubbly administrative secretary in the College of Information Technology and Engineering (CITE) embraces life with verve, grit and a joyous flair.

[Read more.](#)

The next issue of *We Are...Marshall* will be distributed Dec. 14, 2011. Please send any materials for consideration to [Pat Dickson](#) by Dec. 12.



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Commencement begins at 10 a.m. at Cam Henderson Center.

Warner said she was "very honored" to be selected as the commencement speaker. She isn't yet certain what her remarks will be, but she knows what the graduates and their families are hoping for.

"Brevity," she said. "It's kind of complicated, trying to say something thought provoking in a short amount of time. But, you want to leave them with something to ponder."

The Hedrick Award she received last spring recognizes a full-time faculty member who has a minimum of seven years teaching experience at Marshall and has a record of outstanding classroom teaching, scholarship, research and creative activities.

Warner has been at Marshall since 2002, when she was hired as an assistant professor of political science. In 2004, she was awarded both the Pickens-Queen and College of Liberal Arts Outstanding Teaching Awards. Before coming to Marshall, she was a visiting assistant professor of political science at the University of the South (Sewanee) from 2001 to 2002. She received her B.A. from Millersville University in 1991, her M.A. from Penn State University in 1995 and her Ph.D. in political science with a minor in women's studies from Penn State in 2001.

"Students attending this commencement are really lucky to have Jamie as their speaker," said Dr. Marybeth Beller, chair of the department of political science. "Things that Jamie Warner says are memorable."

Beller described Warner as "happy, upbeat and full of energy."

"Her classes are always exciting," Beller said. "She is a fantastic scholar, but she also brings a really interesting perspective to her classes because she helps students understand political theory by connecting it to popular culture. She makes studying academic discipline interesting for students."



Lifelong Huntington resident William Cammack Campbell, once called "a professional at being an amateur," will be presented with a Doctor of Humane Letters degree during the ceremony.

"I'm surprised, but it's a pleasant surprise," Campbell said. "I have a long experience with Marshall, which was always a big, big part of Huntington and still is."

Campbell is the 166th person chosen to receive an honorary degree at Marshall.

"Bill Campbell has been and still is one of the greatest ambassadors ever for the city of Huntington and Marshall University," said Marshall President Stephen J. Kopp. "His reputation both on and off the golf course is impeccable. On the course he has always embraced the traditions and values that define the essence of golf in its purest form ... a true gentleman of golf and life. His numerous amateur victories, honors and leadership roles speak for themselves. Off the course, Bill has been a tireless, civic-minded member of our community and a great supporter of Marshall University. We are thrilled to present him with this well-earned,

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honorary doctoral degree."

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Employed since 2004, O'Lynn was nominated by Nancy Pelphrey and Jonathan Sutton, who are employees of Alumni Relations.

Both have high praise for her dedication to her job. Sutton wrote, "Carolyn is extremely friendly and helpful in regards to both parking and the loan of university vehicles. It is no small feat to manage such a vast grouping of responsibilities."

Pelphrey praises O'Lynn for her "continued attention to detail, her 'can-do' attitude and her willingness to go the extra mile....We travel a great deal in the Alumni Relations office and using a state vehicle is certainly something we do a lot. Never have I had a problem with reserving, picking up or returning a vehicle. They are always clean, gassed and ready to load and travel. If Carolyn promises you a car, then there is one available at the promised date and time."

As a testament to her helpfulness, the pair cited an incident involving a university vehicle that happened last June as they were returning from an extended trip to the Baltimore, Md., and Washington, D.C., areas, where they attended multiple alumni events. Close to 7:30 p.m. on the West Virginia Turnpike near the Sandstone Mountain Exit, and without warning, the auto, with fewer than 14,000 miles on it, developed multiple problems and became disabled. Stranded on the interstate, with no road signs in sight, they had no idea where they were, so they contacted the Marshall University Police Department, which contacted O'Lynn at home. She immediately went to her office.

With the help of a West Virginia Courtesy Patrol driver who had stopped, O'Lynn arranged for a tow to Beckley and for hotel accommodations, since repairs couldn't be made until the following day. In the morning she called to tell them that a MUPD employee was on his way to pick them up. However, Pelphrey said, "Due to Carolyn's efficiency, the car was fixed before we left Beckley and we were able to drive it back to campus. Because of Carolyn's knowledge, efficiency and dedication, we were able to get towed, have a safe hotel for the night and return to campus in the university car. A less than ideal situation was relieved of stress and potential danger because of her attention," Pelphrey said.

Sutton related, "Carolyn kept in touch with us to make sure we had a hotel to stay in overnight (we didn't get checked in until close to 10 p.m.). In the morning, true to her word, Carolyn checked in to let us know the progress...(and said) she would have everything concluded for us by 10 a.m., which she did. Carolyn worked hard so we did not have the worry or stress of what to do. She kept in touch, and followed up every single time she said she would. It is this above-and-beyond dedication, not to her job but to the people she comes in contact with, that truly sets Carolyn above the rest."

O'Lynn was presented with a plaque and a check for \$100 by President Stephen J. Kopp.

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Michele Muth, the recreation center's assistant director of marketing and memberships, said Pump and Run is a great opportunity to get an intense workout, train for other Pump and Run races and enjoy the competition.

The pump--or weight lifting--portion of the race is first, followed by the 5k run on a Marshall Recreation Center treadmill.

There will be five age divisions ranging from 19 and under to 50 and older, as well as male and female divisions. Participants must be at least 16 years of age to compete. Scores will be determined by the 5k time and number of repetitions. Participants can take up to 15 minutes off their running time by shedding 30 seconds with each repetition in the pump portion of the event.

Awards will be given to the overall top male and female contenders and to the first-, second- and third-place finishers in the men's and women's divisions.

Anyone interested in signing up may do so at the Marshall Recreation Center welcome desk or at www.tristateracer.com. All participants must be pre-registered by Dec. 3. The entry fee is \$20.

For more information contact Chris Lane, the event director and personal training coordinator, by e-mail at Lane13@marshall.edu. If interested in sponsorship, contact Muth by phone at ext.6-4732 or e-mail her at Pallante1@marshall.edu.

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A partnership among Marshall, Concord and the Robert C. Byrd Institute for Advanced Flexible Manufacturing (RCBI), the center will provide direct business and technical assistance to entrepreneurs, small businesses and manufacturers, and will primarily serve the southernmost 17 counties in West Virginia.

The announcement took place on the Concord campus in Athens, W.Va.

The goal of the EDA University Center will be to help increase business productivity, spur innovation and entrepreneurship, and improve long-term regional competitiveness and economic diversification of industries across the state. Outreach and marketing activities to engage entrepreneurs and small businesses will be developed, and the center will host events to bring entrepreneurs together with regional industry leaders for networking and exchanging ideas.

Marshall's Center for Business and Economic Research will collect and analyze data about talent pools, workforce readiness and entrepreneurial pathways. These data will be used to help identify regional talent pools, industrial clusters and areas of economic opportunity. RCBI will help provide customized visualization, prototyping and advanced machining training and services for small businesses.

President Stephen J. Kopp applauded the announcement, saying, "Marshall University is pleased to partner with Concord University and the Robert C. Byrd Institute in this exciting initiative to connect small businesses and entrepreneurs in southern West Virginia with the resources that can help new and existing business enterprises flourish. We acknowledge with gratitude the EDA funding that will allow us to launch this new center, and we salute Congressman Rahall for his unwavering support for this project."

Following the funding announcement, Rahall convened a roundtable discussion with regional businesses to discuss the challenges and opportunities of the current economy. Participants in the roundtable included representatives from Blue Smoke Salsa, Concord's Hospitality Sector Program, Custom Manufacturing, the Development Authority of Mercer County, Eigenweg USA Inc., Frontier Communications, Greater Bluefield Chamber of Commerce, Hughes Supply, ManTech Inc., M-Rock Inc., New River Community and Technical College, Princeton-Mercer County Chamber Of Commerce, Region I Planning and Development Council, Smith Services Inc. and the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission.

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Donations, which will be accepted until 4:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Dec. 13., can be dropped off at the following locations:

- Old Main basement mail room - Leonard Lovely
- Memorial Student Center - William "Tootie" Carter
- Department of Housing and Residence Life, Holderby Hall 104 - Miriah Young
- College of Education - Jenkins Hall 232 - Toni Ferguson
- Physical Plant, Sorrell Maintenance Building - Anita Hill
- South Charleston campus - GC 304 - Joyce Harrah

Suggested items include hand lotion, deodorant, aftershave, shaving cream, nail clippers, razors, toothbrushes/toothpaste, body wash, hair brushes, combs, picks, denture cleaner, denture cups, writing pads/pens, hats/gloves/scarves, socks, handkerchiefs, tissues, all occasion cards, laundry detergent and dryer sheets, candy, men's t-shirts or sweatshirts in sizes medium through 5XL (sports themed shirts also accepted), other men's clothing, books, DVDs, magazines, games and crafts.

Toiletries can be travel-sized. Clothing and other non-toiletry items can be gently used.

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If there are questions concerning the election or balloting, contact Joe Wortham, Election Committee Chair by e-mail at wortham@marshall.edu or by phone at ext. 6-5402, or Katie Counts by e-mail at ateaster@marshall.edu or by phone at ext. 6-2222.

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The paper resulted in part from work performed this past summer at the Shared Research Cleanroom Facility (SRCF) at WVNano in Morgantown, WV. A Marshall undergraduate chemistry major, Nathaniel Crow, assisted Wilson through an REU supplement to his NSF-ECCS grant. (The link to SRCF is sharedresearchfacilities.wvu.edu/facilities/srfFacilityCleanroom.html.)

Nano S&T-2011 aimed to offer professionals in Nano related fields a multidisciplinary platform to learn more about the latest scientific updates and current industry standards. Participants explored the intimate knowledge of the research, business and investment activities occurring throughout the global nanotechnology community through business and technology plans. It consists of one plenary forum from a panel of leading experts in nano science and technology, one focused parallel conference on nanomedicine, 16 tracks of parallel scientific symposia on basic research to industrial development, 500+ Oral Presentations by Top Level Engineers and Scientists in Nano S&T and 100+ Poster Presentations for Updating Current Nano S&T.

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The data in the study by Dr. Eric R. Blough and his colleagues at MU's Center for Diagnostic Nanosystems indicate there is a dose-dependent increase in the concentration of cerium in the liver of animals that had been exposed to the nanoparticles, which are only about 1/40,000 times as large as the width of a human hair. These increases in cerium were associated with elevations of liver enzymes in the blood and histological evidence consistent with liver damage. The research was published in the Oct. 13 issue of the peer-reviewed research journal *International Journal of Nanomedicine*.

Cerium oxide is widely used as a polishing agent for glass mirrors, television tubes and ophthalmic lenses. Cerium oxide nanoparticles are used in the automobile industry to increase fuel efficiency and reduce particulate emissions. Some studies have found that cerium oxide nanoparticles may also be capable of acting as antioxidants, leading researchers to suggest these particles may also be useful for the treatment of cardiovascular disease, neurodegenerative disease and radiation-induced tissue damage.

Blough, the center's director and an associate professor in Biological Sciences, said, "Given the ever-increasing use of nanomaterials in industry and in the products we buy, it is becoming increasingly important to understand if these substances may be harmful. To our knowledge, this is the first report to evaluate if inhaled cerium oxide nanoparticles exhibit toxic effects in the liver."

Dr. Siva K. Nalabotu, the study's lead author and a Ph.D. student in Blough's lab, said, "The potential effects of nanomaterials on the environment and cellular function is not yet well understood. Interest in nanotoxicity is rapidly growing."

"Our studies show that cerium oxide nanoparticles are capable of entering the liver from the lungs through the circulation, where they show dose-dependent toxic effects on the liver. Our next step is to determine the mechanism of the toxicity."

The research was supported with funding from the U.S. Department of Energy.

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The Newsletter for Marshall University November 30, 2011

Marshall groups, WV Symphony Chorus to present Haydn, Beethoven works

More than 200 musicians will join forces at 8 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 1, as the Marshall University Choral Union and Chamber Choir, together with the MU Orchestra and the West Virginia Symphony Orchestra Chorus, present Franz Joseph Haydn's "Lord Nelson" Mass and Ludwig Van Beethoven's "Choral Fantasy." The event will take place in Smith Recital Hall.

Bringing together choral and instrumental ensembles for large performances is not unusual in the MU music department and, in fact, this production follows last spring's collaborative presentation of Carl Orff's Carmina Burana with the Huntington Symphony Orchestra. What is different about this production is the presence of the West Virginia Symphony Orchestra Chorus, a fixture on the Charleston music scene. Dr. David Castleberry, director of choral activities at Marshall University, directs all of the choirs involved.

"I have looked forward to the chance to bring these choral forces together for a production and I think the results will be quite exciting for everyone involved," Castleberry said. "The Marshall Orchestra is playing wonderfully and will bring real depth and color to these extraordinary musical works."

The works on this program represent the height of the "classical" style, said Dr. Elizabeth Reed Smith, professor of music and director of the MU Orchestra. "The choice of the Beethoven Choral Fantasy came to mind in discussing a new addition to our music faculty at Marshall, Dr. Henning Vauth. He is a wonderful pianist and we thought this would be an exciting way to welcome him to the department," Smith said.

In addition, soprano Marlayna Maynard, a graduate and voice teacher in the Marshall music department, will be featured as a soloist, alongside a number of current student soloists.

"The concert promises to be an outstanding event," Castleberry said, "but please note that there will be only one Huntington performance." A second performance will be offered at 8 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 2, at Christ Church United Methodist, located at the corner of Quarrier and Morris Streets in Charleston, W.Va.

Admission to both events is free. A free-will offering will be accepted at the Charleston concert.

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Marshall University Jazz Ensemble 12.0 to present 'Senior Day' concert Saturday

The Marshall University Jazz Ensemble 12.0, under the direction of Dr. Ed Bingham, will present its finale performance of the fall semester at 2 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 3, in Smith Recital Hall. . Featured will be the music of the Marla Schneider Orchestra, The Radiohead Jazz Project, Stan Kenton, Bob Florence, Antonio Carlos Jobim and Gordon Goodwin.

This concert will showcase the outstanding student soloists of the ensemble, Bingham said. Austin Seybert, trombone, and Luke Miller, baritone saxophone, will perform featured solo compositions for their respective instruments. Both Seybert and Miller were selected to participate in the Mid-Atlantic Jazz Orchestra and have been two of the most prominent improvisation artists during their time as members of the MU 12.0 Jazz Ensemble. They were members of the MU Jazz Ensemble that performed at the Montreux Jazz Festival and the Jazz à Juan Festival in 2009.

In addition, vocalist Jennifer Billups will be featured in arrangements of Bart Howard's ever-popular tune Fly Me to the Moon, Jobim's *Desafinado* and the Dianne Schuur/Count Basie version of *We'll Be Together Again*. Billups was the featured vocalist for the MUJE's appearance at the inaugural conference of the Jazz Educators Network in St. Louis, where her performance attracted the attention of many vocal jazz professionals.

Finally, the MU Jazz Ensemble will usher in the holiday season with Stan Kenton's medley of Christmas favorites. The ensemble will add French horns and a tuba to accomplish the rich texture that is characteristic of Kenton's compositions.

Bingham said that the time has changed to 2 p.m. from any earlier announcements. Admission is free and the public is cordially invited to attend.

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New environmental specialist hired at Marshall University



Travis M. Bailey recently joined the Marshall University staff as the environmental specialist in the Health and Safety Department, according to Brian Carrico, director of health and safety.

Bailey, a native of Eleanor, W.Va., is a two-time graduate of Marshall, having earned a bachelor's degree in microbiology and a master's degree in biology. He has served as an adjunct faculty member for the past three years teaching microbiology, an endeavor he plans to continue.

Previously, Bailey worked 10 years at the Huntington Sanitary Board, beginning his career as a pretreatment analyst which involved monitoring the industrial facilities in the Huntington area.

He later was promoted to the Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) coordinator position. As CSO coordinator, Bailey was involved in getting a Long Term Control Plan (LTCP) approved by the West Virginia Department of Environmental

Protection (DEP) and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA).

He will be overseeing Marshall's recently acquired Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit issued by the WVDEP. The permit requires Marshall to reduce the amount of storm water and/or pollutants discharged from its property. He also will be actively involved in educating the students, staff and faculty; mapping; inspections; and construction.

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Morrow Library Stack Tower Reorganization to start in January



The Morrow Library Stack Tower will undergo a major reorganization project during the spring semester and summer sessions next year. The primary goal of the reorganization is to consolidate all the monographic material (books) and to place the periodical collection into Library of Congress call number sequence instead of the current scheme, said Nat DeBruin, university archivist and member of the University Libraries staff.

To accomplish the reorganization, it will be necessary to limit browsing access to the Morrow Stacks by faculty, students and community patrons from Jan. 9 through Aug. 27. In order to shift all the collections, many materials will be placed in temporary storage areas

and on carts while other areas are prepared for the new shelving arrangements.

Everyone will be able to enter the stacks accompanied by one of the Morrow staff or work-study students, who will assist patrons in locating the materials that they need for their study and research.

All other services will continue on a normal basis during the reorganization. These services include EZ-Borrow requests, Rapid ILL requests, regular inter-library loans and hold/recall requests for Morrow Stacks items.

"The reorganization will make the materials in the Morrow Stacks more easily accessible to the campus community and the public," DeBruin said. "We appreciate your patience while we implement this plan."

Questions may be directed to DeBruin at ext. 6-3524.

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Profile: Brittney Emerson



She became a lifeguard without ever having a swimming lesson, made the MU dance team and never took a lesson until she was in high school, has a budding decorative painting business, and no surprise here, never had an art class.

Brittney Emerson's life brims with "cans" and very few "cant's." The bubbly administrative secretary in the College of Information Technology and Engineering (CITE) embraces life with verve, grit and a joyous flair.

Born and raised in Huntington, on Rt. 2, she grew up near the YMCA and relished seeing crowds of people splashing around in the outdoor pool, obviously having a lot of fun. A natural athlete, Emerson loved the water, so it wasn't long before the self-taught swimmer was proficient enough to pass her lifeguard exams. She even taught herself to dive. So began a 10-year sojourn as a lifeguard, all through high school and college and even for a time after graduation from Marshall. "I worked part-time during high school and college downtown at the YMCA and I loved it, so I just kept doing it," she says. "At the same time, I also worked part-time at the old Carmike Cinemas at the mall until they went out of business and newer, nicer ones came in. It kept me really busy but I was saving money for college so it was worth it."

After graduating with a degree in business management, Emerson worked as a temp for the Drinko Academy, where one of the most notable events she worked on was the birthday celebration for one of the Marshall's biggest benefactors, Elizabeth Drinko. "It was a huge event, a really big bash that took place in the Joan C. Edwards Playhouse with lots of people attending so it was very successful and a fitting tribute to her."

Since the job was temporary, she soon found a permanent home in CITE working for Engineering and Computer Science. She performs the myriad tasks that helps keep the department running smoothly—working with student assistants, entering classes, ordering books, taking care of travel arrangements and reimbursements. And there's an added bonus, she says. "My coworkers are awesome; they make the job enjoyable. It's actually fun being here with them."

Married last year to Daniel Emerson of Huntington Steele, she and her husband share a commitment to helping others. They were able to demonstrate that through an unforgettable trip to the Dominican Republic this past July. Through their church, New Song, they were part of a group that spent a week in that country working with Spanish church members and performing whatever work needed to be done—and the chores were many and varied, she says.

"We visited a building they were renovating to open as a school. The men dug ditches and did a lot of manual work and the women painted and cleaned ... and we organized thousands of books into alphabetical order. Now, that was job! We visited orphanages, attended services and handed out food in villages, it was a jam-packed week and none of us wanted to come back. We wanted to stay and work."

The group was particularly touched by the children in the orphanages. One was an AIDS institution that housed children infected with that virus. Another was an all-girl home where they found that, despite thousands of miles of separation and innumerable cultural differences, at heart young girls are all the same—as a Justin Bieber song was blasting from the stereo when they arrived!

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They were particularly moved by the children in the orphanages. Adoption is not an option in that country and there are very strict enforcement laws, she says. But she was heartened to learn that children can be helped through programs that provide sponsorships for everyday needs. Another program allows donors to sponsor training in life skills so that the children will be better equipped to live on their own when they "age out" of the orphanages at 18.

The trip was put together with the help of Scores International, which aids groups planning mission trips to not only the Dominican Republic but to Panama and Costa Rica as well. "We definitely plan to do other trips, probably with the help of Scores so we could be going to any one of those three countries," Emerson says. "The trip changed our lives forever. It really puts things in perspective. You just want to come home and sell all your stuff."

And the Emersons have kept the spirit of the trip alive after their return to Huntington. "We realized that there are people in need everywhere, right here in Huntington. You don't have to go to another country to find someone who needs help." That's why often on Saturday mornings you'll find the couple at Harris Riverfront Park handing out breakfast along with a warm smile and some encouraging words to the people who regularly congregate there. Some are homeless, some have health problems, some are just down on their luck, she says. But, no questions asked, they get a meal from the group that does this regularly.

"We're dedicated to our church because it's very mission oriented," she says reflectively. "Since we can't be overseas all the time we can help people right here in our own home town." She and Daniel are diligent workers throughout the year, lending a hand with the clothing and pantry drives, along with other mission work, and they pitch in to fill food baskets at Thanksgiving which are distributed to the needy. "We each take a laundry basket with a list of items to buy for a family. It's something we can do that stays right here in the community."

On Tuesday nights the couple joins others from Tri-State churches for an evening of friendly but spirited volleyball competition. It's fun and can be intense, a good workout for the athletic Emersons. It helps that she's a runner—she even completed the MU half-marathon last year—which makes her a formidable competitor. She came away from that race with a lesson and a resolve. "I had only trained up to six miles and that race is 13.1 miles, so it was double what I had ever run. But I entered anyway and I did finish but I had to walk a little here and there. I was so sore for a week! My goal is to train better and run the race again, this time running the whole way—no walking!"

Physical activity has always been a shaping force in her life and her indomitable, "I-can-do-that resolve" has led her down some unanticipated but ultimately rewarding paths. Take dancing, for instance. Emerson pretty much gave it a pass until her sophomore year at Cabell Midland High School when her interest was piqued enough to give it a try. Again, with no lessons and no training, she just "picked it up," as she says.

Luckily, she was a natural from the start so the movements came easily. Her only formal training came through a few classes she took in the summer. A spot on the Marshall dance team was a dream but her scant formal training made landing that spot seem well out of reach. She was astonished but delighted when she tried out and made the team. "There were certain skill sets that I just didn't have, but the coach saw that I had possibilities for improvement so he worked with me and I got better every year. I was on the team for four years and was captain my senior year. It was a blast. We performed at all the home football and basketball games. Just getting the chance to be on the team made me a better dancer. I even coached for one semester after I graduated."

Again, without any formal training and more or less by accident, Emerson has launched a fulfilling mini-business customizing wooden block letters that spell out a child's name for nurseries. They're all individually designed and personalized to the specifications of the parents to match any theme. To date, among others, she's done Ohio State University—two in fact—superheroes including Batman and Superman, animals of all kinds including safari animals. "It's so much fun to do knowing that whatever the parents want; they get exactly what they ask for. And each set is personalized just for them." And as with other events in her life, the business began more or less as a lark. Searching for an innovative baby gift for a friend she came upon the idea of personalized letters. They were a big hit from the beginning. After making them for a niece, she posted photos on her Facebook page just to share and was surprised when she began getting requests from people who wanted to buy them. "It was like I woke up one day and was related to Picasso," she quips.

And for the active Emersons, even their dog, Kyla, a three-year-old Blue Merle Australian Shepherd is an athlete. "These dogs are crazy energetic, they're herding sheep dogs, very smart. Ours is very ornery! We spend lots of time with her, walking, seeing that she exercises, giving her a lot of attention as they're very affectionate. They're known as the Frisbee dogs, the ones that run after and leap into the air to catch them—they win all kinds of competitions. Kyla loves catching Frisbees and she's great at it too."

Right now, Emerson is exuberant about an upcoming dream trip to New York City to see the famed Rockettes perform. "I'm so excited to be going to see them; this is the best Christmas present ever. Like a lot of dancers, I've dreamed of being a Rockette. I saw them once in Cincinnati, but that's not the same as seeing them in New York in their own setting. This is definitely the best of the best of the best!"

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